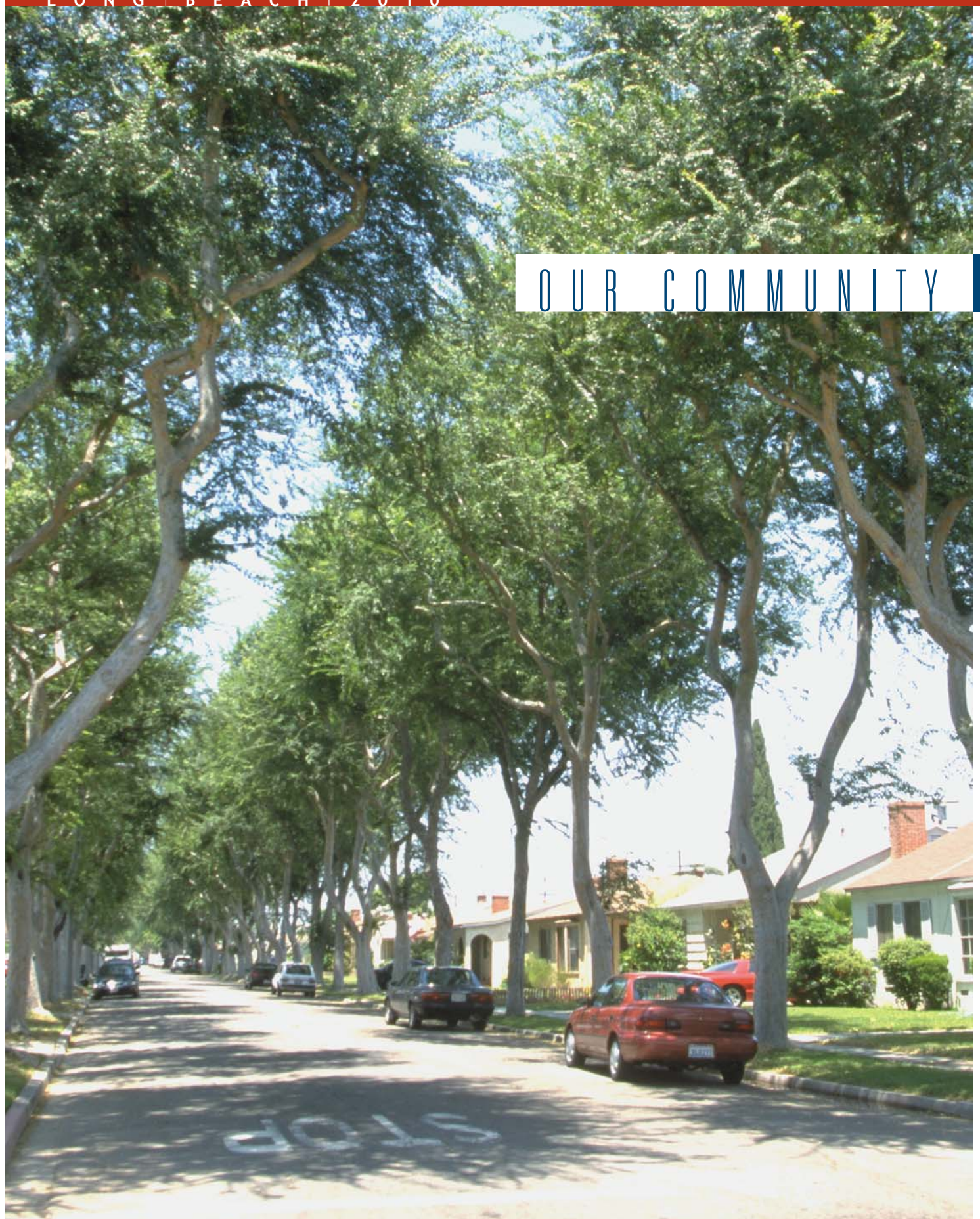


O U R C O M M U N I T Y



“For decades the City’s primary focus has been the downtown and its need to be revitalized....Now it is time for the neighborhoods to be in the spotlight.”

— Jim Brophy

Chair, Neighborhood Development
Task Force

O F N E I G H B O R H O O D S

Restoring neighborhoods as the center of community life is the most important step the City of Long Beach can take to build a positive future.

Something deep within human nature needs to identify with a geographical area—a neighborhood—to help create a sense of belonging. One of Long Beach’s greatest strengths is its rich tapestry of neighborhoods: Belmont Shore, Bixby Knolls, Bluff Park, California Heights, Carroll Park, the Central area, College Square, DeForest Park, Drake Park, Los Altos, North Long Beach, Ramona Park, Rose Park, Sunrise, Westside and Wrigley, to name a few. Over the years, the quilt has grown more varied, with new neighborhoods in the downtown, the East Village, and the West End.

Many neighborhoods have already mounted efforts to strengthen their identities and to promote new connections and collaborations. Our challenge now is to support each neighborhood’s unique identity while aggressively working to halt urban decay and turn around deteriorating neighborhoods. In the end, we will empower residents to make their own decisions about priorities in their neighborhoods and to partner with the City, schools, and businesses to attain their goals.

Goal 1: Build a strong network of healthy neighborhoods

We will identify our neighborhoods, determine their assets and weaknesses, and form strategies to meet community needs by reallocating resources, forming partnerships, distributing services at the neighborhood level, and leveraging technology to make the most of scarce resources. Action steps:

- Establish a citywide network of neighborhood centers in public schools, libraries, commercial centers, and other locations selected by the neighborhoods to link people with government, public, and private resources.
- Set up a technological infrastructure to support a network of neighborhood technology centers in the neighborhood centers (see sidebar).
- Make public and private services, including health, medicine, education, day care, and sports and recreation, more accessible via the internet and at neighborhood centers.
- Enact neighborhood identity initiatives that use master planning, cultural programs, and signage.
- Decentralize City services to the neighborhood level, including decision-making, accountability, and coordination.
- Increase shared use of public facilities, such as schools, after hours.

Goal 2: Strengthen community leadership and collaboration and increase public participation

Leadership building is the heart of community building. With ever-scarcer resources, public and private organizations and community members must promote initiatives together. With more men and women working today, time is also scarce. But we can nurture leaders by expanding successful programs such as Leadership Long Beach and the Leadership Academy run by the Department of Community Development. Action steps:

- Develop more quality neighborhood associations.
- Encourage each City Council member to set up a council of neighborhood organizations within his or her district to help identify and address local issues and trends and to promote inter-neighborhood cooperation.
- Invest in leadership by developing programs to build leadership, including a citywide leadership academy.
- Foster programs and technological methods to help community leaders meet, network, and learn from one another.
- Make agendas, staff reports, and public hearings electronically accessible to increase opportunities for residents to participate in political decisions that affect their lives.

Goal 3: Celebrate the diversity of our neighborhoods and residents, using arts and cultural programs to build mutual acceptance

By 2010, Long Beach will be much more diverse in age and ethnicity. Our diversity is a source of strength, but with diversity comes the challenge of appreciating different viewpoints. To realize the benefits of diversity, we must consciously and concertedly create ways to break down ignorance about other cultures and generations. Bringing arts and cultural programming to the neighborhoods is an ideal way to increase awareness, acceptance, and collaboration. All the city's major organizations must participate—schools, churches, public agencies, businesses, and community organizations. Action steps:

- Enact a Diversity Plan for the city.
- Establish a new source of revenue to bring arts and cultural programs into every neighborhood, focusing on people working together.
- The National Conference for Community and Justice will spearhead the creation of a youth group to work on multicultural issues, including training in leadership and diversity.
- The PTA will reach out to parents of all cultural groups, developing and offering programs to increase multicultural awareness.
- The Public Corporation for the Arts will establish student programs to research family traditions among different ethnic groups, promote cultural respect, and share the information with others.
- Support cultural initiatives that promote understanding and tolerance, such as an international marketplace, a cultural awareness day, and multicultural appreciation activities.



- Actively implement the City's Human Dignity Policy, working with the Human Dignity Coordinator appointed by the City Manager, and show zero tolerance of hate crimes.
- Implement plans to meet the needs of the city's seniors, including health, safety, transportation, housing, and quality of life.
- Implement plans to meet the needs of those with disabilities, including health, safety, transportation, housing, and quality of life.

Goal 4: Support neighborhood efforts to create beauty and pride

Our neighborhood infrastructure is gradually deteriorating and a number of neighborhoods in central, downtown, and west-side of Long Beach are severely deteriorated. We need new public policy, infrastructure and land planning strategies to ensure reinvestment in our neighborhoods. Action steps:

- Improve neighborhood infrastructure: green spaces, median islands, streets and alleys, sidewalks, drainage structures, signage, curbs and gutters, parking.
- Eliminate illegal trash dumping by providing more frequent large-item trash pickups, additional drop-offs for hazardous materials, and increased penalties for illegal dumping.
- Set up a program for weekly alley sweeping and hold property owners responsible for maintaining alleys near their buildings.
- Establish Adopt-A-Street, Clean Street, and graffiti abatement contests in neighborhoods linking schools, students, parents, and businesses.
- Intensify code enforcement and increase staff to eliminate substandard buildings.
- Promote historic preservation and neighborhood appreciation.
- Implement a comprehensive program to "underground" utility lines.
- Educate neighborhoods about the ben-

efits of Property-Based Improvement District assessments to help improve infrastructure more rapidly.

Goal 5: Improve the quality and availability of housing

Home ownership in Long Beach is declining. In some areas, especially the southwest and central parts of the city that are home to low- and moderate-income families, housing is scarce and units are overcrowded. We will need to house 33,000 more residents by 2010. In order to improve neighborhood stability, we need to find locations for high density housing, where transportation and other public and private services can support it. Action steps:

- Update the Housing Element of the General Plan with special attention to overcrowding, home ownership, and affordable housing.
- Revise the Land Use Plan to allow increased density where it can be accommodated, particularly in Downtown and along major transit corridors.
- Increase home ownership to 50 percent, through assistance programs for first-time homeowners and others, construction of new for-sale units on infill sites, and replacement of substandard rentals.
- Provide remodeling assistance and develop joint projects with home-improvement contractors and retailers to improve substandard rentals and develop educational programs about home care for residents.
- Increase public investment in low-interest improvement loans for blighted neighborhoods.
- Address home ownership and rentals for people with special needs, through housing assistance, ownership programs, and renovation loans.

technology in the neighborhoods

Just like the infrastructure that came before it—canals, roads, railroads, and telephone networks—the new information highway expanding throughout our culture will radically change our society.

Long Beach can use this new technology to meet our goals for livable neighborhoods, sustainability, economic growth, and government accountability. We can include everyone in the use of high-speed, high-capacity, digital communication by creating a network of neighborhood technology centers located at community centers and other public facilities with communication and information processing facilities. The centers will:

- Give neighborhoods the tools to determine, prioritize, and communicate their needs directly to those responsible for delivering them.
- Help public and private organizations cost-effectively deliver services to neighborhoods.
- Help institutions provide telemedicine, distance learning, other social services, and commercial products directly to residents.
- Allow residents and businesses to comment on city issues, pay utility bills, apply for building permits or reserve athletic fields directly.
- Improve inter-neighborhood communication and cooperation. With this network, Long Beach can provide all residents with free access to today's information technology. Gaining the "intelligence edge" will yield huge benefits for everyone.